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Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 202 (2015) 462 – 469

Procedia
Social and Behavioral Sciences

ASEAN-Turkey ASLI (Annual Serial Landmark International) Conference on Quality of Life
2014, ABRA International Conference on Quality of Life, AQoL2014, 26-28 December 2014,
Istanbul, Turkey

Life to the City? The Meaning of Sporting Space in Taipei

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the aspect of sport, finding out the problem in Taipei's urban planning. Especially, in the view of people's sporting lifestyle from 1895 to now to open up a new way. The following will divide the Taipei's urban planning into three parts, the Japanese occupation (1895-1945), retrocession of Taiwan (1945-1980), localization of Taiwan (1980-). Each period has its own planning values and characteristics in sporting space. Appeal the urban governance to change its way from developmental model to human model and rewrite our life into Taipei.

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Peer-review under responsibility of AMER (Association of Malaysian Environment-Behaviour Researchers) and cE-Bs (Centre for Environment-Behaviour Studies, Faculty of Architecture, Planning & Surveying, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia).

Keywords: Food; ethnic food; diaspora; identity

1. Diagnose the Taipei city health by observing the sporting lifestyle

Sport as a new element to the city, the discussion is only in the field of cultural studies in Taiwan. As a matter of fact, the sport isn't just a cultural factor. Moreover; sports issues could link with the debate of public space and other social problems. That's the exact area, which has the essence of daily life, residents' activities and city's source of vitality. It's necessary to diagnose seriously and understand the everyday life of citizens so that the operation of the urban planning will be closer to the public than before. (Fig. 1).

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Fig. 1. Baseball as the element in daily life.

Over the past few decades, diagnose cities' health is almost impossible in Taiwan. The strong top-down ideology in the urban planning lead to a series of problems, such as failure in reviewing the plan. In the terms of urban planning, the comprehensive review should be a tool for planners to revise the plan, but the review mechanism, which only deals with quantitative data, let the whole planning system out of order. In short, the transformation of cities is not only taking place in a particular field, but also causing the overall transmutation. In this respect, diagnosing a city with only few indexes or standards from planner isn't enough to clarify the situation that had happened. Although, the original idea of "Healthy City" that proposed by WHO (World Health Organization) is for rethinking the increasingly growing population problem since 1980s. In particularly, responding to living environment. Unfortunately, the urban planning in Taiwan is a lack of participatory mechanism. The top-down planning isn't work in any circumstances. It's necessary to bridge the plan and sport to offset the conflicts between each other, creating a new way to the future (Shirotsuki, Otuki and Sonoda, 2010). Taipei, the capital of Taiwan, had promoted the concept of Healthy City since 2002. However, the Taipei government define the healthy in a narrow sense. Which only focus on the medical, care services... Sport isn't the central character in this framework. Recalling the history of the urban planning in Taipei from 1895, the most favorite sport, baseball, is profoundly affected the whole Taipei city's pattern, space and planning strategy. However, it had never taken seriously in urban planning. The tension between the urban development and sporting space is getting worse and worse.

2. Changeable role of sporting space in Taipei

The sport, baseball, is called "Taiwanese pastime," also an important factor to indicate the daily life of Taipei (Wu, 2005). There are two dimensions about "Taiwanese pastime". First, Taiwanese past is a grand narrative to cover the essence of sport from the Japanese occupation to nowadays (Wu, 2005). It's not only affecting the urban planning, but also constructing the illusion to baseball. Second, when baseball is becoming part of life and gives energy to the city. Meanwhile, the sporting space, baseball, turns into the reproduction space to Taiwanese people. People could recognize the city by joining these activities. Showing their identity to the city (Suthasupa, 2011). With the change of time, these two senses interact with each other. Facilitating Taiwan's plan to design brand new landscapes in the city. The spaces will represent in our living environment. In this point of view, the following will divide the Taipei's urban planning into three parts, the Japanese occupation (1895-1945), early retrocession of Taiwan (1945-1980), after localization of Taiwan (1980-). Each period has its planning values and characteristics in sporting space. These constitute the meaning of sporting space to Taipei.

2.1. Field to be Samurai's leisure time - the Japanese occupation (1895-1945)

Taipei, the urban planning, was influenced by Japan in this period, the form of space shows different objectives. Huang (1985) point out there is three important books published, which had affected the urban planning in Taipei. The "Downtown corrections Plan", 1900; the first time of Urban Expansion plan, 1905; the second time of Urban Expansion plan, 1932 (Huang, 1985). Each one has its purpose to the city, but the governance showed different attitudes to sporting space before and after 1919. At early Japanese colonial period (1895-1919), the "Downtown Corrections Plan" and "the First time Urban Expansion Plan." represent not only an active environment oriented improvement, but also enhanced the legacy of colonial. The infrastructure, including the road system, water and sewer system, blocks design and site planning, is established. The Government House which is the symbol of colonial, located at the center of Taipei (Huang, 1985). The arrangements attempt to transform Taipei into a place that is suitable for living for Japanese in every detail. The park in this plan, Shin Park, which scheduled in 1900 and completed in 1907, is the only statutory sporting space in Taipei. While the Shin Park is under constructing, other sporting area, such as Butokukai Square, which is located at the place where scheduled to build the Government House, is an informal one but provide the Japanese to train or exercise from 1895 to 1907. It is the first time to put the concept of sport in planning. When the relevant sports of organizations and spaces had built during 1900 to 1919 (Hsieh, 2010). The sporting area seems to serve for everyone because the organizations can transform the leadership to cultivate the people to imitate the activities (Honari, Goudarzi, Heidari and Emami, 2010). But it's not the fact, the modern sports is just a tool to discipline the Japanese army and Taiwanese people in this period. One of the reason is the government making an utmost effort to prevent any armed resistances happened; the other is Japanese has a stereotype for the Taiwanese, the most famous example is Taisou, using for training the lazy and weak Taiwanese. (Hsieh, 2010). Both of them are not for leisure. Even the Shin Park is the site only for baseball; the team members are all Japanese (Hsieh, 2010). Because the government believed that baseball has the spirit to get people together, and then to have the power against the colonial regime. Baseball always the privilege only for Japanese, reject any Taiwanese participate with (Hsieh, 2010). Another cultural reason is causing the consequence of inactive participation. The Confucianism, which teaches people how to live, is the center of life. With the feature of agricultural society, it is believed that sport is wasting time. Farm families may need labour for farming, and children are requested to help the family work instead of joining outdoor activities (Hsieh, 2010). After 1919, the assimilation policy that is the watershed of governance, open up an opportunity for baseball into the daily life (Hsieh, 2010). Added at least 14 sporting spaces in Taipei. These places reveal the Japanese ideology "baseball are everywhere" (Wu, 2005). The field started to hold the championship, promoting the school to team the baseball partnership. The government cultivated the society to be with baseball. Most outstanding sporting space is "Yuan Shan field," which built at 1923, it hosted the big baseball events, such as Koshien. Others, which aren't using for the official game, were used to attract more participants, eliminating the ideology of baseball as a class sport. (Hsieh, 2010). It brought the baseball fever all over Taiwan from the 1920s to 1930s; NOKA and KANO were the most famous school team in this period. (Fig. 2). Furthermore, at "the second time of Urban Expansion Plan", 1934, the government proposed a green belt system that is precisely for leisure to depict a healthy living environment in Taipei's future. Declared recreation has become a part of people's life in Taipei. Unfortunately, when the Eight-year war erupted at 1937. The Japanese government ordered to stop any new constructions and sporting events (Huang, 1985; Wu, 2005).



Fig 2. Baseball team- KANO.

Source: Retrieved Dec 7, 2014, from <http://www.thinkingtaiwan.com/content/3468>.

While the original idea of the modern sport that is promoted by the Japanese government is for their political profit, the sport, baseball, had deeply integrated with Taipei's daily life. People had a new identity shows the sporting space belongs to everyone during this period.

2.2. Ballpark as an illusion to Asian tiger - retrocession of Taiwan (1945-1980)

In general, the complex political situations are the main factors during this period. The ROC government considers Taiwan that is just a temporary base to retake the mainland. The urban planning had lost its function in the early twenty years of retrocession (Chang, 1993). These factors destroyed and reconstructed the daily life to the city.

The political factor is the most one that caused the population explosion. When ROC government retreated to Taiwan at 1949, resulting in a max saturation capacity of planning which planned by the Japanese government (Chang, 1993). All the frameworks of urban planning still used for Japanese System. According to urban planning, at 1932, Taipei's maximum population capacity is 600,000. However, Taipei's population had grown at least twice as before in just fifty years, and the population in Taipei is about 300,000 at 1939, and the population is about 620,000 at 1954 (Chang, 1985). Large numbers of mainlanders who came from the mainland with the ROC government at 1949 move into Taipei let the urban planning completely out of order. Mainlanders built illegal buildings and acquired a large amount of cheap land which reserved for public facilities. With the passive management, the government couldn't afford to solve these problems. Although the "Taipei Comprehensive Development Plan" revised the old one at 1946, but it still didn't figure problems out (Chang, 1993; Huang, 1989). At the same time, the competitive pressures that came from the international market drive the government reduces the budget to invest in leisure and other public facilities to lower costs (Chang, 1993). It was Taiwan's prototype of developmentalism in urban planning. The governance from ISI (Import Substitution Industrialization) to EOI (Export-oriented industrialization) strengthen the ideology of economic development (Chou, 2003). The period of ISI is from the 1950s to 1960s and EOI is from 1960s to 1980s. Taiwan got the title of Asian Tigers from the period of EOI (Chou, 2003). Urban planning had been only dealing with economic indexes to calculate the output of the city. For example, Yuan Shan field, which was the symbol of baseball in Taipei, was levied by the US Army at 1951. Then, Shin Park became the only place to hold any kinds of cups (Wu, 2005). Such as Association of Banks held the tournament at from 1948 to 1960, but the budget limitations became the executioner of these activities (Wu, 2005). Due to the strategy of the government wanted to retake the mainland China, most of the state budget would be moved for military purposes or another sport. The government put baseball at the border, and basketball had become the centre

due to the ideology of de-japanization. (Chang, 1993; Wu, 2005). Only a few of that would put in baseball, lots of school team dismissed during this terrible time (Wu, 2005). Notably, the state grasped the power to control the direction of the local development by collecting taxes (Chang, 1993). Taipei as the capital of Taiwan had attracted lots of industrial and commercial activities; it totally lost its autonomy. That was exactly the reason Taipei didn't have the right to build the sporting space. On the other hand, people, who lived here, couldn't have a proper sporting environment. Taipei was forced to be a city without any quilt of life by the state. Huang (1989) indicated people should have 8.6m² green areas per person at 1932. However, people only have 2.4m² areas per person at 1985. The standard of green areas suggested people should have 6m² green space per person at least at 1985. Furthermore, the government revised and mixed the regulation of usage of public facilities, allowed the private capital to investigate the construction of public facilities (Chang, 1993). Starting to promote each public facility should serve for multi-objective (Chang, 1993). Such as school combine the function with park and parking lot connect with the market.

Although sporting spaces decreased by the government, it didn't stop the people playing baseball. Indeed, baseball had become the most popular sport in Taiwan, yet the atmosphere of sporting space had changed in Taipei (Wu, 2005). While the economic development was the primary concerned with the state, the regulations of public facilities and the life of residents became victims. Meanwhile, Kuo-Cheng, Hsieh. The father of Taiwanese baseball, dedicated to promote Taiwan baseball to the world (Wu, 2005). Persuade the government to build the first standard baseball field, Taipei baseball field which is the only ballpark construction in Taipei during this period. Under his efforts to improve the Taiwan's baseball environment. Later, the Horng yeh and Gold Dragon youth baseball appear and open up the history of baseball in Taiwan to win Triple Treble title for five times from 1958 to 1991, baseball had become "Taiwanese Pastime" (Wu, 2005). The Taiwanese Pastime had turned into a brilliant history and also given public confidence when the political crises, quitting UN at 1979, happened. It brought out the consequences of the sport had been entirely lost its sportsmanship and the meaning of education for children (Wu, 2005). People who engage in only believe in utilitarianism, only the winner can get the funding from government. The grand narrative had twisted the spirit of sport and narrowed the way to design the public facilities in the urban planning area. Baseball fans would be only spectators, not participants. The sporting space had been only for the elite in Taipei. For Taiwanese, even the glorious baseball history, it was just the indispensable key role to exploit by the government for hypnotizing people into the illusion of Asian Tiger.

2.3. Conspicuous spectacle hijack the public - localization of Taiwan (1980-)

The localization of Taiwan is an awkward position. The ROC government turned its attitude to focus on Taiwan's future, and the situation was still tough. After Taiwan had quit the UN at 1979, the government started thinking the long-term plan in Taiwan. Due to Taiwan had accumulated a larger amount of capital during the ISI and the EOI period, enhanced the overall level of consumption (Chou, 2003; Jou, Wu and Chiang, 2009). Taiwan has to face the impact of globalization; the government decided to turn the Taipei as the node of the financial centre in East Asia at 1980 (Chou, 2003; Jou, Wu and Chiang, 2009). In the formation of the atmosphere of the consumption society. Government tried to attract world's eyes, and it's necessary to build conspicuous large constructions or land development projects for enhancing the urban competitiveness in the world city system (Jou, Wu and Chiang, 2009).

The new city centre had been one of the spectacles to identify the city in the competitive world (Jou, Wu, and Chiang, 2009). Undoubtedly, another chance for Taipei to get the promotion is the sport, baseball. The "Taiwanese pastime" is twisted by the government to use for creating consumption spaces. This is an opportunities to integrate the ideology between developmentalism and sporting space (Khotdee, Singhirunnusorn and Sahachaisaeree, 2011).

The project of Xinyi showed the CBD of Taipei moving from west to the east side (Jou, Wu and Chiang, 2009). At first, the project of Xinyi is the financial and new city centre, the city government planned to move government agencies there to attract foreign investment into it. Practically, due to the urban planning had lost its development and regulatory. It means the local government had no budget to handle such a huge scale development. Urban planning had hijacked by consortia's power of capital (Chang, 1993; Huang, 1989). This project had stop for several times because of ownership. Lack of development funding was the main factor. Finally, the city government change the goal to Xinyi, and this project became the largest consumption landmark in Taipei at 1998 (Jou, Wu and Chiang, 2009).

The problem is the comprehensive review in Taipei. It is only providing the quantitative indicators that followed the Urban Planning Act. It had produced plan more commercial spaces instead of public spaces. Moreover, due to the BOT (Build-Operate-Transit) and private-public partnership models had promoted to welcome the public participation into it, reducing the risk of development to city government at 2000. Expanding the right of consortia to boycott the urban planning (Jou, Wu and Chiang, 2009). After this point, any kinds of projects are toward to create consumption spaces in Taipei. For instance, the Taipei baseball field was diminished and rebuilt as Taipei Arena at 2000 is just the beginning (Wu, 2005). Taipei Dome is another typical case to understand how the government using the sport to sold the public land to the consortia and turned a sporting space into the consumption space. The 1980s to 1990s is the history gestation period of the professional baseball, fans always complained about the quality of the baseball field, and requested the government to invest more money to build a standard ballpark for people (Chen, 1999). Afterward, this project started at the 1990s, and the process was quite hard. City government could not afford this large public construction, and the political wrangling between KMT and DPP party changed plans repeatedly (Chen, 1999). Although the site was finalized nearby the Song Shan cultural park, it brought out lots of arguments. (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Taipei Dome.

BOT let the land-use rights belong to the consortia and allowed them to plan only 30% of the land used to be public space, others used to be consumption space, such as department stores, the fairness was challenged by the public. Second, in terms of professional baseball status in Taiwan, no one could afford or maintain this high price ballpark. Also, this ballpark charges fees for all kinds of activities, narrowed the definition of public facilities. Third, the location of this field at the centre of Taipei, the capacity of that is about 40,000 people; it would give tremendous pressure to the surroundings. Moreover, there didn't evaluate the impact of this construction. When Taiwan entered the consumption society, all the public space had treated as assets that only the government had the right to deal with public lands. However, this value totally destroyed people's daily life in Taipei. The sporting space has become the commodity that only serves for the people who grasp capital and power. Under the influence of "Taiwanese pastime." Fans had been brainwashed into believing that the only consumer can help Taiwanese baseball. As Ujang (2010) mentioned, the identity to the environment is influenced by the experience. As a matter of fact, Taipei Dome, a symbol of modernity and progress is a bargaining chip to exchange for only political interests. People can only stand the consequence.

3. Field of dreams? Rewrite our sporting daily life into Taipei

The entangled structure of urban planning affects the people the way to experience the city. Especially, baseball is another way to understand the history of Taipei. The meaning of sporting space have different pattern languages that made by the relationship with daily life in a different period (Cheshmehzangi, Heat, 2011). Observing the meaning of baseball in daily life can excavate why and how the public spaces had always used only for few people who have the power of capital. As the Japanese occupation period, though the government used baseball as a political tool, the sporting spaces were vibrant in Taipei. The people, who couldn't afford the baseball gear, use their rules to play in the informal field (Hsieh, 2010). People were interacting with the urban planning. As the early retrocession of Taiwan, the government owned the absolute power to decide everything. In general, the only elite could get the chance to continue their career. Others didn't have any chances to do that. The priority was always the output as same as the urban planning. Only the commercial activities could make money, and the public facilities couldn't promote economic growth (Chou, 2003). In short, the utilitarianism brought elitism to Taiwan, cutting off the contact between baseball and people. People are just spectators. That's the key why the sporting space to be just the scenery. As the localization of Taiwan, the land commercialization is the problem, causing an argument between public and private. With the awkward urban governance, Taipei has turned into a city that couldn't provide sporting daily life, which means the sporting spaces had still kept in the lowest standard. Ironically, the standard is still much lower than the period of the Japanese occupation until now (Huang, 1989). The more sporting spaces charge the fees from people to maintain its quality but endanger the living environment.

Based on above, it reveals the ideology of urban planning from 1895 to now, in sequence is "plan with people, plan for people and plan without people, the following will make a few suggestion as feedback. First, in the terms of urban planning in Taiwan, no matter the master plan or comprehensive review is always following the Urban Planning Act, the quantitative index is the only standard to evaluate an area where should have sporting space or not. Trying to set new standards, the combination with the qualitative method to balance the result of planning. Another problem is there aren't having effective regulation tools in it. The consortia still boycott the decision of planning. The better way is set up a special foundation that collects taxes for urban developing. Block the consortia to control the direction of development. Second, the sporting space should rethink as an independent project to urban planning. The existing laws and regulations set a rough category of public facilities; it should be more detailed about the different type of facilities. Sporting space should development a series planning method, from access, planning, design and operation. Third, due to the lack of participatory way in urban planning, the planning scale of Taipei should start from the community. It would be easier to produce satisfactory strategies and policies than planning at the city scale now (Peerapun, 2011). Also, it's a chance to promote the sporting planning in every community. To raise awareness on sports lead to the potential population, let them turn into participants, not just only spectators. Therefore, urban planners should create spaces for children to experience the positive experiences, attracting more people participate the sports (Faez Mohd Latfi, Abdul Karim, (2010). Fourth, studying in the history of baseball is just the reflection of the development of Taipei. How to figure out difficulties? It's not only find the way to propose the suggestion to the governance of sport, but also discover a new way to manage the city. These three periods may give the feedback to urban planning nowadays. The sporting construction, such as Baseball Park, isn't the only way to accumulate the capital, but also the spirit of the city, and Taipei's spirit is exactly coming from the people who had lived here. That is the meaning of life to the city. To write it down, Taipei may have brand new life in the future.

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